TL1505-21

Submission ti the UN Human Rights Commission
Und er item 9, on self-determination.
by the Women's International Lesgue for Peace and Freedom

Mr Chairman and distinguished members of the Commission,

[redacted]

Indonesia was the first colony in the East to declare its independence in 1945. Its people take justifiable pride in their successful struggle for self-determination. It is with deep regret therefore that we draw the attention of the members of this Commission to its violations of the right to self-determination of other neighbouring peoples.

Indonesia's present-day borders are the product of colonial rule. The end of centuries of Dutch colonial rule should have led to the decolonisation of all the peoples in the archipelago. But it did not do so. Official Indonesian policy towards the entire region is formulated as wawasan nusantara, the archipelagic concept, which asserts Indonesian hegemony over all the islands of the region. [redacted]

The first victim of this policy was West Papua. The one million or so people of West Papua are Melanesians and are ethnically distinct ~~fro~~ from the people of Indonesia. Socially, economically, culturally and politically they were never part of the Indonesian nation. Yet despite this, West Papua was transferred from Dutch to Indonesian rule by a temporary UN administration. Then after six years of Indonesian rule during which all manifestations of support for self-determination were suppressed, a so-called act of free choice took place. The act involved only 1,025 hand-picked delegates, chosen by the Indonesian military authorities, yet the United Nations "took note of" this act, and thereafter recognised West Papua as Indonesia's 26th province. In fact, West Papua had become Indonesia's first colony. This must surely be one of the blackest events in the history of the United Nations.

Then in 1975, East Timor, a Portuguese colony, was invaded by Indonesian troops, nine days after it had declared its independence. Over a decade later, Indonesia's Foreign Minister publicly acknowledged that the situation in East Timor in 1975 had "called for intervention." He said, "On 7 December 1975, the Indonesian army landed at Dili. The guerrilla war that followed involved 30,000 soldiers. Thousands of lives were lost on both sides." (Indonesian Observer, 17 July 1986) This is the closest any senior government official has ever come to admitting that East Timor was annexed by a war of intervention. Six months later in war-torn Dili, with most of the country outside the control of Indonesian

forces, hand-picked members of a bogus assembly asked for integration with Indonesia. This is what Indonesia now proclaims as its 27th province. This is in fact its second colony.

Today, Indonesia is gaining international recognition as a Third World colonial power. The peoples it has subjugated for years have recognised this painful fact of life ever since Indonesian troops set foot on the territories.

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West Papua has felt the full impact on colonial exploitation by Indonesia for nearly 25 years. 1984 however was a turning point. This was the year when 12,000 West Papuans living near the 700-mile border with Papua New Guinea decided that they had had enough of Indonesian rule and fled across the border, seeking refuge. Many thousands were villagers, but also among the refugees there were people who served in the Indonesian armed forces or worked in the administration, revealing that there was indeed widespread resistance to Indonesian rule even in the cities.

The flight of these thousands of West Papuans drew attention to conditions in the country and to the widespread unrest as no other recent event has done, forcing the international community to acknowledge West Papua's long-drawn out struggle for self-determination. Today, despite the trying conditions of camp life and the yearning of these Melanesian people to return to their homes, some ten thousand West Papuan refugees, according to the UNHCR, are still living in camps in Papua New Guinea.

The immediate impetus for the exodus was an Indonesian military operation in February 1984, and the atrocities suffered by village people in the border region. But more fundamentally, it was prompted by the growing anxiety about the threat to West Papuan land rights posed by Indonesia's transmigration policy. Many transmigration sites had already been established near the border. 1984 was the first year of Indonesia's fourth five-year plan when 137,000 families , or about 650,000 people were to be moved into West Papua from Java, almost doubling the population. The creation of many transmigration sites along the border with Papua New Guinea is aimed at creating a cordon sanitaire - an expression which has been used by Indonesian officials - between Indonesia and its neighbour, Papua New Guinea. The purpose is to consilidate the arbitrary colonial border established in 1848 which cut the Melanesian inhabitants of the island into two.

The transmigration programme, along with the spontaneous migration of tens of thousands of people from Sulawesi, is turning the Melanesian people into a minority in their own land.

Hence the demand for self-determination for West Papua is more pressing today than ever, and it can no longer be ignored. The survival of a nation

and a distinct people is at stake. For a quarter of a century, the UN has ~~not~~ failed in its duty to recognised West Papua's right to determine its own destiny in accordand with Resolution 1514 (XV) on Decolonisation.

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The case of East Timor is no less urgent. After a visit to Dili last Christmas, the Indonesian armed forces commander-in-chief acknowledged that it would still be years before East Timorese resistance to Indonesian rule could be defeated. Indonesia is not a stranger to the basics of facts guerrilla warfare and strongly believes that its own guerrilla war against the Dutch triumphed because it had the support of the people. The leaders of Indonesia cannot have it both ways. If this was true for Indonesia in the 1940's, it is no less true for East Timor today.

Not long after the armed forces commander spoke, the governor of East Timor admitted in an end-of-year statement that "integration still exists only on paper". (Kompas, 31st December 1987).

Because of the continuing level of resistance and of military operations, East Timor is cut off from free contact with the outside world. Visits into the territory are closely supervised and the government has publicly announced that no-one wishing to investigate conditions or examine complaints about human rights violations will be allowed to do so. Indeed, the Indonesian ambassador to the United Nations stated: "We will never ever welcome investigative visits." (Jakarta Post, 16 September 1987. The governor himself has often complained about the lack of access to the territory. In his end-of-year statement to which reference has already been made, he posed the question, "When will the territory be opened up?" (Kompas, 31 December 1987) But the answer does not lie within his powers. The territory can only be opened up if the Indonesian Government believes that it has control of security, if resistance has ceased, and if it has no human rights abuses to hide from independent investigators. And such conditions can never be achieved as long as the people of East Timor continue to demand their right to self-determination.

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Until the government of Indonesia recognises the legitimate rights of these two colonial peoples, resistance will continue, atrocities will persist and civilian casualties will fall. The people of West Papua and East Timor are ~~living through their present tragic situation~~ victims of a foreign occupation, no less than the people of Namibia, the Palestians and indeed all the peoples whose causes have been so eloquently addressed during this session. The most sacred duty of the United Nations is to bring about peace and see that weaker peoples are not subjected to the tyranny of their stronger neighbours. We therefore urge this Commission:

to keep East Timor on its agenda until the country has won its independence,

to take the necessary steps to incorporate West Papua onto the agenda of the UN Decolonisation Committee,

to consider in its own agenda the human rights situation in West Papua.

For the proper conduct of these tasks, the Commission should request of the Indonesian Government that free access should be allowed into both countries so as to ensure that the human rights situations can be kept under close scrutiny.

Thank you